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4

THE PRESIDENT'S INTELLIGENCE CHECKLIST

ISSUED BY THE

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

26 NOVEMBER 1963
TOP SECRET

1. Iraq-Syria

a. The shaky new accommodation between the two countries following the recent coup in Iraq has been threatened by Syria's action in granting asylum to Ali Saleh Saadi, the exiled leader of the extremist wing of the Iraqi Baath.

b. Saadi had arrived in Syria unannounced following a brief stay in Madrid. On Friday, Iraq sent a message asking Syria to expel him on grounds that sheltering him was a breach of agreement.

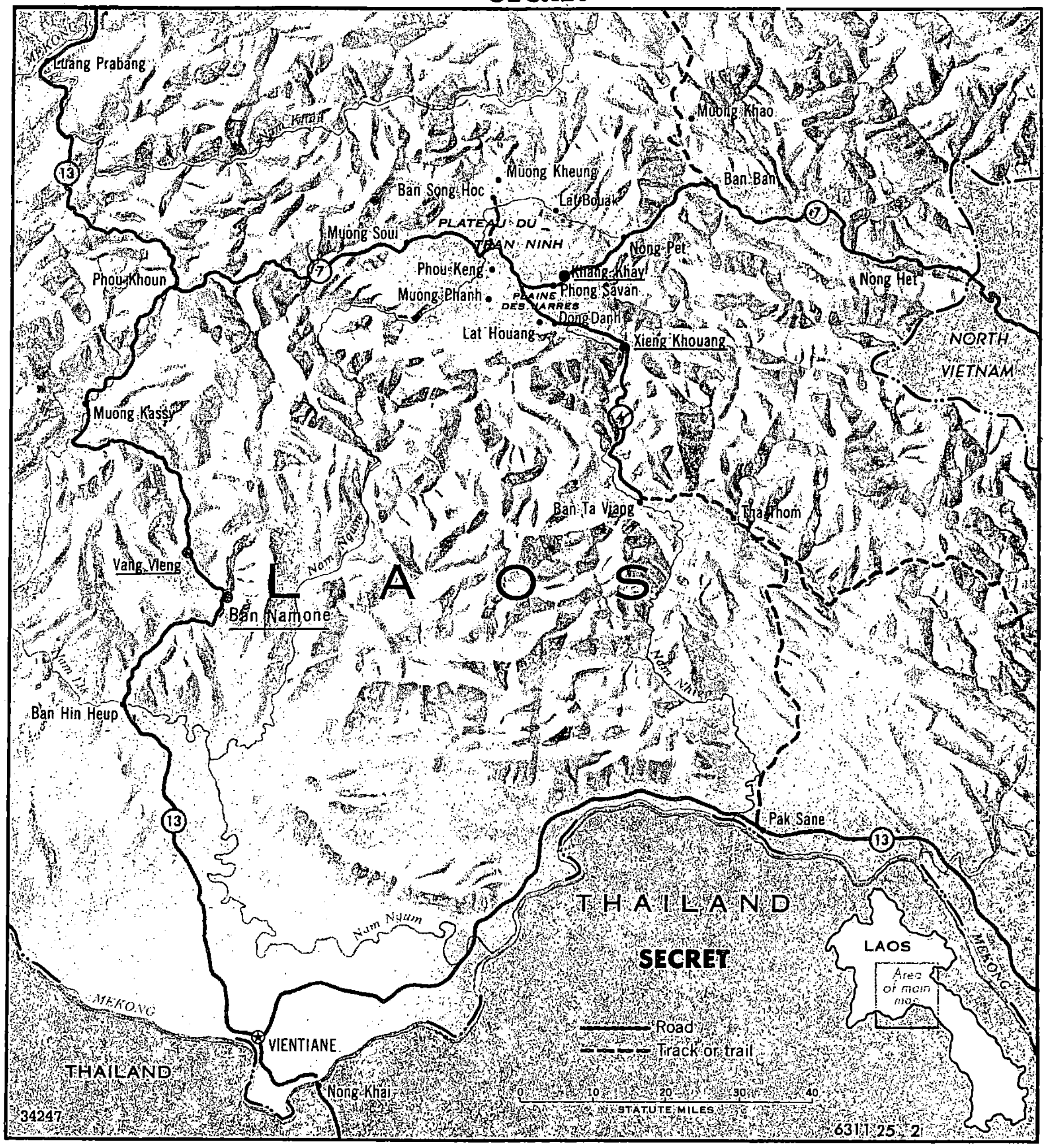
c. Both regimes continue to be troubled with internal dissension with affairs in one deeply tangled with those in the other.

d. In Syria, as we mentioned yesterday, the Baathist regime is split between moderates who desire a broadening of the government's power base, and a doctrinaire faction which wants to keep all control of the government in Baathist hands.

e. In Iraq, the pull is more away from the Baathists. Two ministers have threatened to resign unless the government adopts an openly pro-Egyptian policy. Nevertheless the government feels secure enough to ease up on curfew and transport restrictions imposed since the coup.

(Cont'd)

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f. Iraq has announced that the military union with Syria remains in force, and that a new commander of the joint armies will be announced soon.
(Includes INTERCEPTS)

2. Laos

a. Intercepted neutralist messages on Sunday reported that government forces had finally secured Vang Vieng and its airfield, long held by the Pathet Lao. They also told of the capture of Ban Namone farther south on Route 13.

b. The neutralist, rightist Lao Army, and Meo tribal guerrilla forces hope to sustain their coordinated clearing action until remaining Pathet Lao pockets in this area north of Vientiane are cleared.

c. Such operations in Laos have often been followed by a Communist riposte. We have a few indicators that something could be up on the Communist side, but these are so far very tenuous indeed.

d. One such indicator is a stand down in the last two weeks on the Hanoi-controlled military communications net in Laos which could

(Cont'd)

point to a change in the disposition or strength of Communist forces. Other enemy nets are normal.

e. There are also unconfirmed reports of North Vietnamese troop reinforcements in the Plaine des Jarres.
(INTERCEPTS)

3. South Vietnam

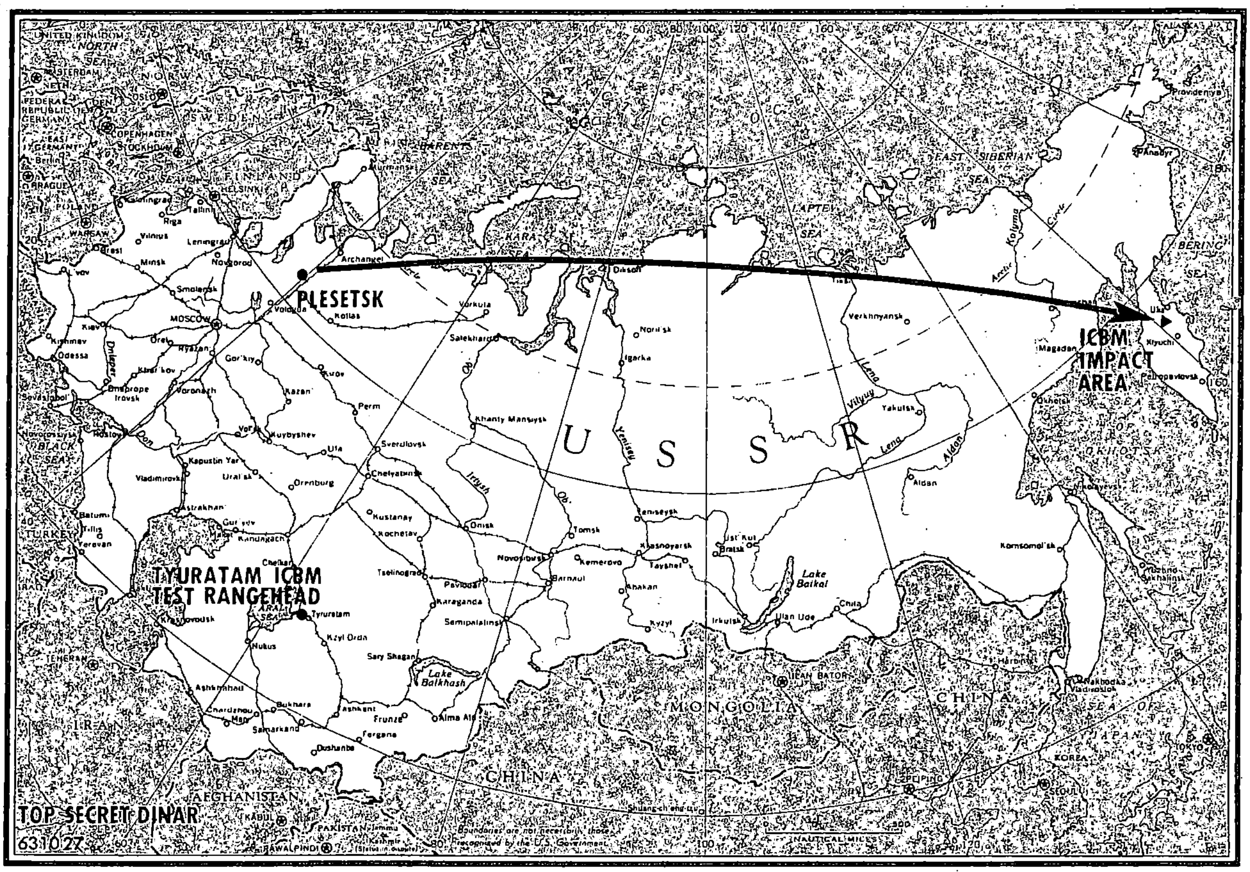
a. According to press reports, Viet Cong attacks on Sunday wiped out two of the government's strategic hamlets in the central highlands about 250 miles north of Saigon.

b. More than 1,000 inhabitants in the hamlets--who are minority tribesmen--are missing and possibly have fled into the mountains. They abandoned a significant quantity of weapons to the Viet Cong.

c. These attacks not only suggest continued erosion of the government's programs to win over tribal support, but also signal that stepped-up Viet Cong pressure against the new regime is spreading to the north.

(Cont'd)

22 OCTOBER 1963 ICBM FIRING FROM PLESETSK



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d. This Communist effort is aimed at discrediting the post-Diem regime before the new leadership is able to get its feet on the ground and capture the loyalty and respect of people in the provinces.

e. Although the Viet Cong still continues to draw its main strength from local recruiting, a steady stream of cadre and training personnel continues to make its way to the south from North Vietnam along the Laotian border.

f. We are now reasonably sure that at least 784 persons infiltrated from the north during 1963 and the actual total may be much higher.

4. USSR

a. There have been no further developments in Soviet preparations for a series of extended range ICBM shots to the Pacific.

b. We probably should have had by now an announcement closing an area roughly 500 miles south of Johnston Island to shipping. We suspect the Soviets may have delayed it in order not to appear to be rattling rockets immediately after President Kennedy's death.

(Cont'd)

c. The USSR may repeat last year's performance of multiple firings from a prototype operational complex at Tyuratam. Three such launchings were attempted at five-minute intervals in May 1963; two succeeded.

d. We also do not rule out the possibility of firings from operational sites as opposed to the test center at Tyuratam. We observed the first such firing on 22 October from the Plesetsk site, roughly 400 miles northeast of Moscow. (Includes INTERCEPTS)

5. USSR-Berlin

a. Embassy Bonn feels that the Soviet Union may be seeking at least a temporary modus vivendi on the autobahn without prejudicing its juridical position, which can be used to cause difficulties there in the future.

b. The embassy bases this on the Soviet replies to the Western notification to the USSR on 29 October regarding harmonized convoy procedures--two oral statements on 16 November and a note of 21 November.

(Cont'd)

c. The Soviet note was designed to make a record, showing that the USSR exercises "control" of the autobahn and that the recent incidents resulted from US refusal to comply with "existing procedures."

d. On the other hand, the Soviet procedures described in the oral replies seem to reflect actual Allied practices, though there is enough ambiguity to afford the USSR flexibility in any future actions.

6. Brazil

a. The danger of an immediate coup against the Goulart regime has receded with the reported decision of Second Army Commander General Bevilaqua not to join the coup plotters.

b. Bevilaqua, who has been something of a storm center, may have been asked to hand over his command today as part of a series of reassignments made by President Goulart to keep the military off balance.

c. On the other side of the coin, there is widespread belief that Goulart himself will at some time resort to a coup to establish an authoritarian regime.

(Cont'd)

d. As one example Raneiri Mazzilli, President of the Chamber of Deputies and next in line for the presidency, told Ambassador Gordon on Saturday that he profoundly mistrusts Goulart's intentions and intends to maintain the strictest congressional vigilance.

e. Our station in Brazil believes that Goulart is living in a dream world. He seems either out of touch with reality or very poorly informed. Public opinion is not with him and the tradition that political power should only be transferred constitutionally is very strong in the army, coup reports notwithstanding.

f. The biggest danger from this quarter is that the opposition may resort to some illegal act, giving Goulart the excuse to take over.

NOTES

A. Ethiopia-Congo Haile Selassie has acceded to our ambassador's request and is rescinding his earlier decision to withdraw the 1,743-man Ethiopian contingent from the UN force in the Congo.

B. Communist China - Africa The Guinean ambassador in Peiping has it unofficially that Premier Chou En-lai will leave in mid-December for a tour of some Afro-Asian countries. He is to stop first in Egypt and then visit several other African countries including Guinea, Ghana, and Mali. Chou would be the highest ranking Chinese leader ever to visit Africa. (INTERCEPTS)

C. Indonesia-Philippines Two good sources have reported that President Sukarno plans to go to Manila this Thursday to confer with Philippine President Macapagal. No reasons have been advanced for the visit. Our chargé guesses that it is an Indonesian move to head off Philippine recognition of Malaysia.

D. Venezuela The terrorists have struck again, this time firing six US-owned oil and gas pipelines near the northeastern city of Puerto la Cruz. The elections are still on for Sunday, and we look for a maximum effort from the pro-Castro terrorist organization.

E. Congo We now have word that 49 members of the Soviet Embassy, including dependents, left Leopoldville on Saturday aboard a Sabena flight for Brussels. They are expected to book onward passage for Moscow. It is reported that the Congolese will allow one Russian without diplomatic status to stay to look after Soviet property.